

P.G. #86A-12

ca. 1894

St. Simon's Church Site and Cemetery
St. Thomas' Church Road, Croom, Md.
Priv/Unocc/Cem/Site

St. Simon's was a simple frame structure constructed on the grounds of St. Thomas' Rectory and later transported a short distance south to the present site. The chapel was demolished in 1972. The cemetery is located on a one-acre parcel of land ca. 1/4 mile south of the chapel site; it contains many gravestones from the early years of this century, and is still in use.

In 1892, Rev. Frank P. Willes became Rector of St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Croom, and it was under his leadership that a chapel was built ca. 1894 for Black communicants. Although St. Thomas' had been ministering to members of the local Black community for more than a century, the construction of St. Simon's chapel allowed separate educational and social events, and attracted a larger Black congregation. (The success of the school held in the chapel led to the establishment in 1903 by Suzanne Willes, sister of the Rector, of the Croom Industrial and Agricultural Institute; cf. P.G. #86A-24). In 1902, St. Simon's received its first full-time Black priest, August Jensen, and in that year the chapel was moved from its location on the St. Thomas Rectory grounds south to the other side of St. Thomas' Church Road; a cemetery was laid out ca. 1/4 mile to the south. Twelve Black priests served St. Simon's until it closed in 1964; at that time the congregation merged (again) with St. Thomas', and the chapel was demolished ca. 1972. Its site, and the nearby cemetery, constitute a very important Black historic site, representing one of only two Episcopal chapels established for Blacks in nineteenth century Prince George's County.

Survey No.
P.G. #86A-12
Magi No. 1704564632

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic St. Simon's Church and Cemetery

and/or common

2. Location

street & number St. Thomas' Church Road ☐ not for publication

city, town Upper Marlboro ☐ vicinity of Croft Congressional district 4

state Maryland county P.G. 20772

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name P. G. Co. Board of Education

street & number telephone no.:

city, town Upper Marlboro state and zip code Md. 20772

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. P. G. Co. Courthouse liber #3086

street & number Main Street folio \$ 482

city, town Upper Marlboro state Md. 20772

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title P. G. Co. Inventory of Historic Sites

date 1974 ☐ federal ☐ state ☒ county ☐ local

depository for survey records History Division, M-NCPPC

city, town Riverdale state Md. 20737

7. Description

Survey No P.G. #86A-12

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☒ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☐ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

St. Simon's was a simple frame structure constructed on the grounds of St. Thomas' Rectory, and later moved a short distance south to a new site. A chancel and tower were added to the chapel, and a two-story frame vicarage was built next to it. The chapel was closed in 1964 and demolished in 1972; the vicarage was demolished in 1973.

St. Simon's cemetery is located on a one-acre parcel of land ca. 1/4 mile south of the chapel site; it contains many gravestones from the early years of this century, and is still in use.

8. Significance

Survey No. P.G. #86A-12

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
1894-1972	
check: Applicable Criteria: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	
and/or	
Applicable Exception: <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> G	
Level of Significance: <input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local	

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support. St. Simon's Site

By the 1890's St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Croom, which had been built in the 1740's as a chapel-of-ease of St. Paul's, Baden, was already 150 years old.

In 1892, Rev. Frank P. Willes was confirmed as Rector of St. Thomas, and it was under his rectorship (1892 - 1903) that a mission chapel was built (ca 1894) for black communicants. Although St. Thomas' had been ministering to some members of the black community for generations, the construction of St. Simon's on the grounds of the St. Thomas rectory building, allowed for separate educational and social events among the black community, and attracted a larger black congregation. (The success of the school held in the chapel in its early years led to the establishment in 1903 by Suzanne Willès, sister of the Rector, of the Croom Industrial and Agricultural Institute; cf. Croom Settlement School).

In 1902 the congregation of St. Simon's petitioned the Bishop of Washington for a full-time black priest to serve St. Simon's, and the Rev. August E. Jensen was installed in June of that year. Immediately after his arrival, the chapel was moved from the St. Thomas' Rectory grounds, across St. Thomas' Church Road to a 60-acre tract of land which Suzanne Willès had just purchased for that purpose. The small frame structure was lifted onto rolling logs, and slowly transported by this means to its new location just south of St. Thomas' Church Road. Services were actually held in the chapel enroute during the moving process, which took several weeks. After the chapel was stabilized in its new location, a Minister's House (vicarage) was built on the lot immediately adjoining, and a few years later a cemetery was laid out 1/4 mile to the south. A series of twelve black priests served St. Simon's until it was closed in 1964. At that time, the congregation of

(see attached continuation sheet)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Cont'd) P.G. #86A-12

St. Simon's merged (again) with St. Thomas', and the chapel stood vacant until it was razed circa 1972. A year or so later, the vicarage was also demolished. The 60-acre tract on which both buildings and the cemetery were located was deeded (in 1964) to the P.G. Co. Board of Education, but responsibility for maintenance of the (approximately one acre) St. Simon's cemetery remains with the Vestry of St. Thomas. The cemetery remains in use today.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No P.G.#86A-12

P.G.Co. Deeds: 3086:482; 173:77; 137:343; 97:345; 91:343,
344; 82:248; 16:7; 7:373

Diocese of Washington Archives, 1940, pp 102-03; "Brief
History of St. Simon's Chapel" by Rev. F.P. Willes, 1935;
Interviews with Rev. E. Raffetto and Ellen Henson, and Frank Perry.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan G. Pearl

organization History Division M-NCPPC

date December 1982

street & number 4811 Riverdale Rd.

telephone 779-2011

city or town Riverdale

state Md. 20737

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by
an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated
Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and
record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of
individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

St. Simon's Church-Cemetery

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

dirt lane, south of St. Thomas Church Road, near Rte. 382

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Croom

VICINITY OF

STATE

COUNTY

Maryland

Prince George's

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☒ SITE
☒ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☐ PRIVATE
☒ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED
☒ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PRO'

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES RESTRICTED
☐ YES UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☒ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Prince George's Co. Board of Education Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Upper Marlboro

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Prince George's County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Liber #:

Folio #:

CITY, TOWN

Upper Marlboro

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
 SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a small cemetery plot that sits in the woods beside a dirt lane (south of St. Thomas Church Road, east of Rte. 382.) There are apparently a number of markers here.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Apparently, this was the cemetery for St. Simon's Church, that stood nearby on St. Thomas Church Rd. It seems to have been an early-20th Century Negro church.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael F. Dwyer, Senior Park Historian

ORGANIZATION

M-NCPPC

DATE

9/17/74

STREET & NUMBER

8787 Georgia Ave.

TELEPHONE

589-1480

CITY OR TOWN

Silver Spring

STATE

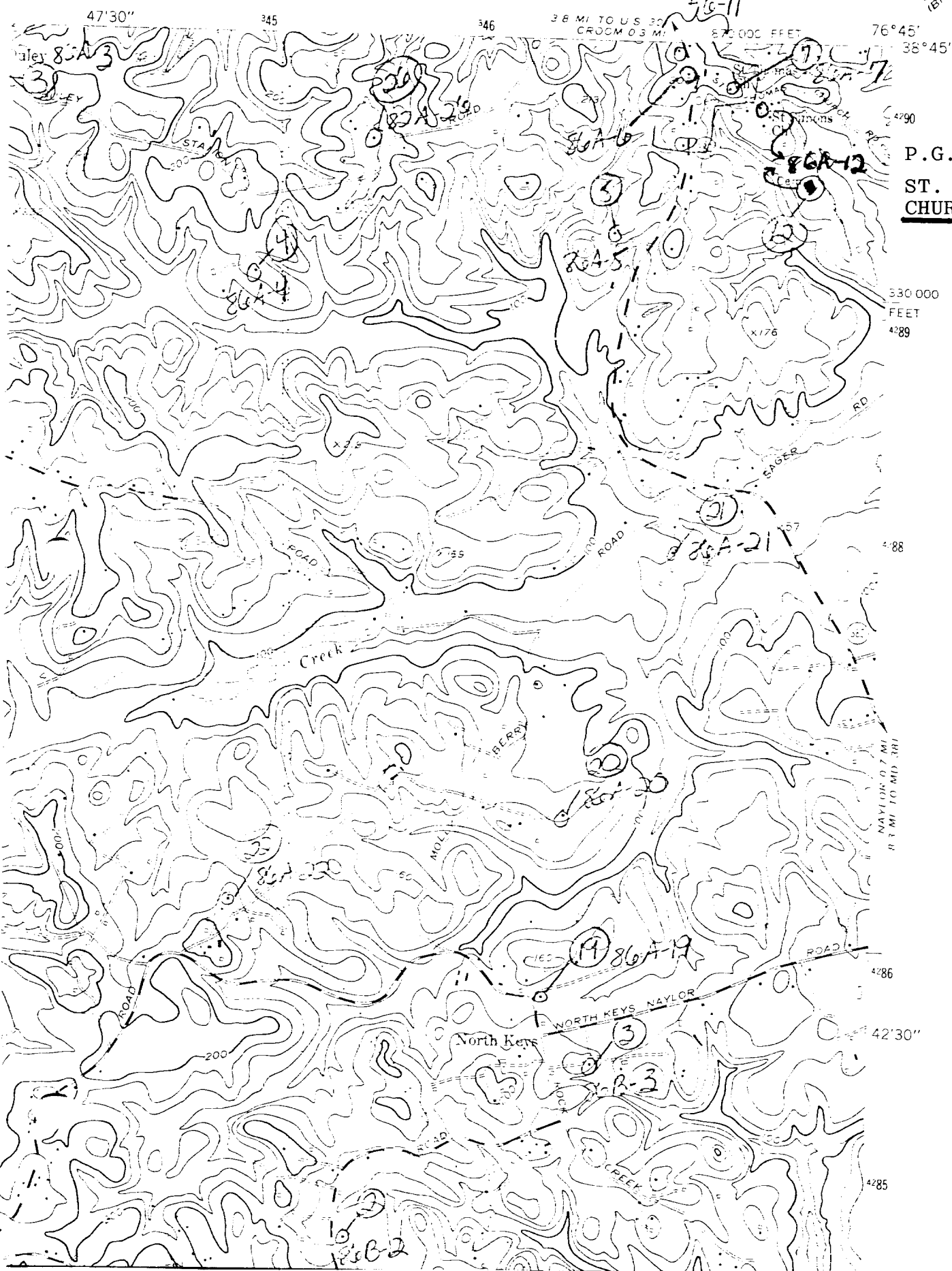
Maryland

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The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

5661 / SW
(BRISTOL)





P. G. #86A-12

Site of St. Simon's Church
Prince George's County, Md.
Susan G. Pearl
January 1983
View to northeast
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.



P. G. #86A-12

St. Simon's Cemetery
Prince George's County, Md.
Susan G. Pearl
January 1983
View to east
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.